1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

844 171

cord the child will die if this is eaten; if it is buried deeply the child's teeth will appear late and if shallow they come early.[1]

844 754

No traces of corresponding beliefs were found among the Kols, but they have the conviction, common to village India, that, should wrong persons get possession of the placenta and the umbilical cord they are likely to be used in magical practices dangerous to the mother and the infant. They should therefore be well-guarded and no outsider should have access to them; this is why they usually are not taken out of the house and are buried beneath the floor. A childless woman, by eating a portion of either the placenta or the umbilical cord may dispel the influences which keep her barren, but in so doing there is every chance that it will result in injury and even death in the family from which she received by stealth the required parts. [842]

846

The work of the *dai* ordinarily lasts for six days, that is, during the full period of the uncleanness. Sometimes however, this is dispensed with as far as the full period is concerned, but during the time the *dai* is in the house it is her duty to care for the mother and child. For the first three days the mother is not supposed to take anything except a little milk but after that period is over she eats a bit of food after the first bath. If the child is a male the *dai* is usually paid one rupee for her work, and if the child be of the other sex, half that amount. During the period of her work the *dai* is given food from the household and when she leaves certain other presents and clothes are likely to be forthcoming. No difference in the period of uncleanness is made on account of sex—in either case it lasts for six days. In some places there is a relaxation of the strictness after the third day. A special drink said to be made of "ginger root (*Cleome viscosa*), raw sugar (*gur*) and certain jungle roots boiled together" is given to her three times a day until she is stronger. [262 272] [757]

846 789 824

During this period the mother is confined to her room. She should not touch anything and should spend the time lying down. Certain measures should now be taken to protect the mother and the young child from evil influences. These influences are particularly malignant during the first six days, but may be overcome by certain methods. A small fire should constantly burn in the lying-in room and should be kept alive by wood from the *bel* tree (*Aegle marmelos*). *Bel* is the wood of the gods and they are attracted by its smoke and no evil spirits dare be present at the same time. Sometimes twigs of *bel* wood are placed beside the infant or a twig of the same may be imbedded in the floor. The wood of the *nim* tree (*Melia azadirachta*)

1 *The Birhors*, p. 223.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

553 derived from the month of *Phagun* (February-March), or the town or village of his birth may be selected. More often though, the name of some Hindu deity or hero is given: combinations of Ram being common as Ram Prasad, Ram Avatar and the like. In Appendix II is given a list of Kol names.

551 It is common though, to find that the name thus officially given to the child is seldom used in actual life and a pet name or *alias* is used. This name is often a coarse one, or one considered inauspicious. The real name is kept secret and often forgotten and the child becomes known by his alias. A name is really part of one's personality and can be misused if obtained possession of by an unfriendly person or spirit. So the child may be called *Makkhi* (fly), *Ghatita* and *Ghasu* (pulled up, useless), *Pagal* (crazy), *Langra* (lame), *Ghuruwa* (filth) or *Kana* (one-eyed). When directly asked why such names as these are given two answers were commonly given: the first is that high caste people did not like to hear low caste people called by high-sounding names. This is probably a rationalization, though there may be truth in it. The second answer was the frank avowal that some malicious [754] person or *bhut* might come to know of the real name and through it work some mischief on the person concerned.

852 *Hair Cutting*: *Mundan*. Occasionally this also becomes an
302 opportunity for a ceremony of a special kind, but like name-giving a great deal is not made of it; particularly among the more primitive Kols.
[177] If the family is somewhat Hinduized they may have the hair cut on the banks of the sacred Nerbudda River; or the ceremony may be performed in the house by calling the Hindu *nai*, who shaves the head, leaving but a small top-knot called the *choti*. Adult Kols, however, [782] do not always keep the *choti*. If they can afford it a young kid or pig is sacrificed at this time and the blood sprinkled over a fire placed before some *devi* such as Shardamai. The animal is then cooked and is feasted upon by all. The *nai* may be paid one rupee for his services. The time of hair cutting is not fixed, but it is generally done between the time of the close of the mother's impurity and the first anniversary of the child's birth. Yet there are exceptions to this, even if it be the regular procedure, for we have often seen Kol boys with uncut and unkempt hair. When the older folks have been asked why this is allowed they have given various answers. One family said that they would not cut their child's hair until they returned to their native land of Rewa when it would be "properly" cut. Another said that until there was a marriage in the family they would not cut the child's hair. It is also held that it is left uncut so that the demons will believe

l:Griffiths M-5 (ca.1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

that the child is a girl and let him alone, for it is boys that they really try to get hold of.

Hair from the first cutting should never be thoughtlessly thrown out on the ground. The best thing to do is to wrap it in a small piece of cloth and take it to the Nerbudda River where it is thrown in as an offering. No special trip to the river is required and the hair may be kept in the house until some convenient season or until some friend or relative happens to be going that way. The belief that magic may be worked with hair is prevalent in India, but Kols do not seem to fear this danger, nor do they believe that another may work harm by possessing it.

First Feeding: *Pasni*. Most Kols attach considerable importance to the child's first feeding with solid food. This should be done when the child is about six months old. One group said that the feeding should be done at five months in the case of a girl and six months for a boy. This indicates Hindu influences.

The family invites as many of the child's relatives as they can afford to feed for a general feast following the ceremony. The child is to be fed with sweetened *khir*—rice boiled in milk—which has been specially prepared for this occasion. A portion of *khir* is placed in a small cup made from the leaves of the mango tree (*Mangifera indica*). As the ceremony begins, the friends and relatives wash their hands with water specially brought for them; the child's teeth, if in, are cleaned by being lightly brushed with a mango twig. The person who breaks the child's "fast", and this may be one of a number of relatives, among whom we find mentioned the name of the father, mother and father's sister (*phuphu*), first dips the index finger of the right hand into the *khir* and brings a portion up to the child's mouth but does not actually touch its lips, for the finger is immediately withdrawn. This movement is made six times, but on the seventh occasion the finger is put into the child's mouth and with it a bit of the *khir* is inserted. Others present follow in the same way until all have fed the infant. Each one who thus feeds the child is supposed to drop into a dish beside it some money, the amount varying according to circumstances: it ought not to be less than four pice and may be as much as eight annas. The money thus collected is used to buy silver bangles for the child.

Sometimes the child is fed with a silver coin rather than by the plain finger. This may be an influence of Hinduism. One group said the silver coin must be either a four or eight anna piece. The coin used is dipped into the *khir* and the baby fed on the seventh approach as in the above description. The *phuphu* receives the coins by which

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

776 entering into it in the form of a dog, a cat or an owl. They may assume almost any form and their bite is very poisonous. They can quickly change their shape and appearance. The female type, called *rakshasi* goes about in the likeness of a beautiful girl and seduces men. Nevertheless, this type of demon is easily fooled and if one is clever and does not lose his nerve he can outwit them.

Kols are also familiar with other kinds of spirits such as the *gayal*, the *pisach* and the *hogi*, but little seems to be known about them. The literature on tribes and castes is rich in spiritism and much might be compiled concerning spirits. The above represents the usual Kol point of view.

776 824 775 THE DWELLING PLACE OF SPIRITS. Kols believe that trees are the most likely place for spirits to dwell. The *banyan* tree seems to be the favourite place for the spirit, although it is said that the *churel* prefers a *nim* tree, particularly if broken or dead. It is claimed that the mango and the *bel* trees are not often inhabited by spirits. The tamarind tree is connected with the *jind*.

776 823 Spirits may also dwell in rocks and certain weird shapes in their appearance are probably due to the activity of some spirit living there.

776 825 764 Animals may become habitations for spirits, and some, like the *rakshasas*, freely enter into them. The graveyard and the burning grounds are sure to have some spirits dwelling near them and Kols avoid such places; or if they must pass by, go two by two. Such places should never be approached at night.

776 342 789 It was noted that spirits enter houses through doors and other openings. Doors are therefore generally surrounded by demon-scarers, and windows are never found. Evil spirits also enter and dwell in human beings, coming in through the mouth, eyes, ears or nose; so these points should be especially protected. They may also run up the legs or the arms and suitable bangles are worn to prevent this.

● 754 THE EVIL EYE: NAZAR. Men and women may also be possessed of an evil power to injure or distress one another. The evil eye, *nazar*, exerts a powerful and dangerous influence and is often evidenced by a squint or the loss of an eye. The person with an evil eye has an inherent power which may be transmitted through a mere glance, and this power strikes one as surely as a bullet. The very glance of such persons is particularly penetrating and it is not good to have any one gaze at you, for it may be that death is in the look. Children are particularly liable to be affected by the evil eye, and ill health and

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

even death are often traced to this influence. A woman is more likely to have an evil eye than a man. Kols believe that Gond women should be avoided as far as possible for many of them are said to have an evil eye that is likely to affect children. A well-dressed person is more likely to be affected than a poorly dressed one, and to put on fine clothes is to attract attention and therefore invite danger.

The evil eye may also be directed against animals and plants; so a bad crop, or the illness or death of an animal, may be due to some one with an evil eye. Pumpkins are often trained to grow upon the roof of Kol houses and may be protected from the evil eye by white-washing an ordinary flat tile, making a cross in the centre with lamp-black, and putting upon the tile as many dots as there are pumpkins growing upon the roof. This will protect them and no pumpkin will rot. A rotted pumpkin is the sure sign of the activity of this mysterious force.

The time of eating is a particularly dangerous one from the point of view of the evil eye. No stranger should come into the presence of one who is taking his meal, and at that time he should turn his back on all people, including even the members of his own household. If one possessed of the evil eye should see the face of a person taking his food it may have a serious result. Therefore it is wise never to interrupt a man at his meals; this a stranger will never do. If accidentally confronted in this way, the eater should stop his meal and wait till the person has passed out of sight. To be seen in the act of putting on new clothes is also to expose oneself to the dangers of the evil eye, should such a person happen by.

WHAT THESE FORCES DO. We have seen something of the supernormal powers which the average Kol feels are all about him. What do these powers bring to pass? Some indication of this has been given already, but more may be stated. Diseases, particularly wasting diseases, are surely due to the presence of evil spirits or the spell of the evil eye. Any mysterious disease may be ascribed to these powers. Ill luck is also due to the attention of the forces named above. A man may be tripped up: it is the work of a spirit; he cuts his hand: a *bhut* directed the axe. We were told of a certain evil spirit dwelling in a banyan tree on the Great Deccan Road near Katni. He was particularly annoyed by cyclists: probably he could not get used to the march of civilization. This spirit was especially active at midday and midnight, and if a cyclist should fail to show respect, by not dismounting and walking by the tree at those particular hours, he was sure to be killed. It was commonly reported

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

that several men had already lost their lives, and others had been injured because they failed to show deference. At any time of the day one who passes this place should get off his cycle, stop, ask permission of the spirit to pass by, then walk with his cycle and mount it again a few paces beyond.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES. Various kinds of devices are used by Kols to ward off the power and effectiveness of the evil eye and the spirit world. The protective remedies commonly employed are listed alphabetically.

Abuse. The abusive language and songs generally used at the time of the wedding have a prophylactic value. There is somehow resident in *gali* a power which protects the bride and groom from evil influences.

Ashes are commonly employed both on religious and social occasions. Immediately after birth the new-born babe is dusted with ashes. They are also scattered over the place of birth, lest the spirits get a portion of the afterbirth and use it against the child and the family. A magic circle of ashes is put around the bed of the mother and her new-born child. When the *nara*, the stump of the umbilical cord, falls off, it is buried in the floor of the house, and a fire which is kept burning over the spot constantly supplies fresh ashes.

Ashes are kept in shrines to frighten evil spirits away. A portion thrown into the air from time to time will be effective in doing this. A fleck of ashes in a child's mouth after feeding with milk keep *bhuts*, who are passionately fond of milk, at a safe distance from the child. The ashes from burnt cow dung cakes are especially useful as are the ashes of wood from the *bel* tree.

Bangles are a protection. The glass types are mostly decorative, but their colours are efficacious as certain colours repel demons. Kols believe that metal bangles are the most effective, particularly the copper and iron types. As *bhuts* may enter through the feet or hands, bangles on the wrists and ankles prevent that way of entry.

Beads about the neck of children are particularly defensive against the evil eye. They should be of bright colours and the Kols most often use a type made from lac. Blue beads about the necks of cattle help to protect them from the evil eye and all valuable animals should be so guarded. A unique charm noted in this connection, though not among the Kols, was that of old bicycle chains fastened about the necks of cattle.

Charcoal, because it is a form of ash and black in colour, is a devil-scarer. Mixed with milk and wine and spread in a circle, it

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

forms an effective bar to evil spirits who dare not cross that line. Sometimes it is dropped into milk as it is brought home, in order to protect it from the milk-loving *bhuts*.

Colours are also an effective protection. Black is particularly valuable as a prophylactic from the evil eye. Hence lamp-black is put on the face just beneath the child's eye. This disguises and renders him less attractive, and as a result the evil eye will not linger on him. Black marks on a white-washed tile or earthen pot ward off the evil eye in the case of crops. Black also pleases Kali and she is glad to see it.

Red frightens off demons and red flags found above almost every shrine have a dual significance : they please the good spirits and frighten off the evil ones. The *sendur* (vermilion) put on the bride and groom is a protective at that vital time. Following the purification ceremony, six days after the birth of the child, the mother's feet are coloured red.

Yellow also protects and there are anointings with turmeric in oil at the times of birth, wedding and death. At such crises of the soul they keep away forces bent on evil.

White is also used : a white *pot*, or daub, placed on the side of the face, immediately in front of the ears, is said to be protective in the case of the child and wards off the evil eye.

Copper. Iron and copper bangles are common among the Kols and some say that of the two copper is to be preferred and is more effective ; it was offered to Hanumanji the monkey god, and is hence very sacred. On no account should this sacred metal be used for dishes nor *lotas*, especially if the *lota* is to be taken out for latrine purposes. To do this would insult Hanumanji and show disrespect to copper. The copper bangle is a very potent charm, and among Kols it is often found that children have a copper anklet on one foot and an iron one on the other. The same applies to the wrists. The little boxes frequently seen attached to strings about the neck, containing powerful protectives such as tiger's claws or *mantras* (written charms), are generally made of copper.

Incense and Smoke. Incense attracts good deities and, conversely, repels evil personalities. At the time of worship incense is thought of as having this dual function. The odour of burning *ghi* is very effectual in this respect. Smoke usually repels demons and if articles which cause an evil odour are dropped into the fire they are driven away. In the Kol birth chamber the baby is passed through smoke soon after birth, and for some days the air in the lying-in room is kept smoky by means of a fire smoldering somewhere within it.

I:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

171
539
755
789

Marhi, Marhi, I call you. Thou who are in the heart of the cemetery. By merely looking at the smoke of that dead body drive out fever, pain and all that is not well; for if they do not depart then she is not my Marhi.

171
539
754

5. To bring a curse upon, or even to kill an enemy:

Chandi ke uppar Chandi awe. Muh phero nao. Khandi chakra uppar chakra dhawe. Nand masi ki hari age ari, na tah, cha tah, pherna sath muh pherayu, tin so sath. Sachhi meri Chandi.

Chandi after Chandi appears: with moving form and circle; wheel after wheel comes. We have waited for this month and the time is exact. Now go here, now go there, make sixty circles with this instrument (may be a knife is in the hand). Yea, three hundred and sixty circles. My Chandi is true.

171
539
755
789

6. For cure from illness:

Khermai, Khermai, Khermai, main pukharu. Teri dava yadi yeh achhi na kare to no kahawe sachhi meri Khermai. Washa khali na jai to dhobi ghat na hawe.

Khermai, Khermai, Khermai, I call to you. I am at your door. If you do not cure this one then you are not truly my Khermai. No, her words never fail, (but if you do not come) then better go to the dhobi ghat, and take your bath.

171
789
776
[539]

Probably no rational interpretation of these *mantras* is possible. The translations are more or less literal and no translation can really give the feeling put into them. They call upon the gods, plead with them, challenge them, threaten them. To tell one to go out and bathe where the *dhobis* wash clothes is an insult: no decent person would do such a thing. If the goddess can be angered she may accomplish the task just to prove that she is not what the speaker insinuates. The goddesses are made in the likeness of unstable and fickle persons and thus partake of human failings. When the *mantra* is properly recited it is thought to have an inherent power to force the deity to do what the one using the *mantra* desires. The above

li:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

171 789 776 examples are current among low caste Hindus and do not represent the more polished type to be found higher up.

Milk. The use of milk has been mentioned in connection with 272 776 782 789 the magic circle. The good spirits like it, and certain evil spirits are passionately fond of it. Milk is scattered over the ashes after the funeral pyre has burnt down. Milk propitiates Nag, the serpent god.

551 789 *Names.* Great care should be exercised in the selection and use of names, as they become a part of one's personality. A good name is also attractive to evil spirits, and if the spirits come to know that a certain child has such a name they may make an attack on the innocent thing. Therefore, call the child by an evil name such as 'fly', 'filth', 'one-eyed', and the spirits will not condescend to notice him. [754] Such names protect in another manner as well. If one gets possession of the name of someone—his real name—he may, through the charms of black magic, work harm to the person concerned. Therefore the child's true name should never be known to people lest they should work ill with it. The use of magic on a false name is ineffective and no harm can come to one.

789 [825] *Noises* of various types are demon-scarers for they dislike noise; hence the beating of drums, the occasional fireworks and other devices, by which loud noises are produced when necessary.

789 824 *Nuts and Seeds* of various kinds are useful. Many Kol children have a *ghata* nut (*Ziziphys xylopyrus?*) tied to a string which is hung somewhere about the person, often on the wrist. Mustard seeds are freely sprinkled about if spirits are expected, and, as in the case of limes, distract their attention. They are scattered round the place where a body is burnt. [585] Black *urad* pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*) is often used on similar occasions. The *supari* nut (*Areca catechu*) is placed below the sacred pole in the marriage booth and under the foundation stone of the house. These are in this manner protected from evil.

789 263 *Salt* has its magic use among the Kols. It has a preservative power, and this, together with its power over demons, accounts for its being scattered over the place where the dead have been cremated. [765] It should not be put into the food during the period of mourning after a death in the home, and the chief mourner should not use it for a year.

755 787 825 782 *Scape Animals.* Among Kols there is a belief that an evil spirit resident in a man may be transferred to an animal and the man thus freed. It is not unusual to bring a man believed to be possessed of a spirit before the shrine together with a chicken or goat, usually the former. The *panda* invokes Khermai amid singing and drumming, or mostly drumming, and there may be a *baira* along with it. Under

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

789 WITCHCRAFT. Magic, it has been seen, is very characteristic of the Kols and religion and magic are inextricably mixed, so that it is hard to say where one begins and the other leaves off. The Kol priest is sometimes learned in magic lore and may know the processes of black magic as well as white magic. Instances of white magic have been scattered throughout this study. And yet it is our belief that Kols are not over familiar with magic and witchcraft. Roy has a statement in his book on the Kharias which I feel is true of the Kols whom we have studied. The quotation follows:

789 171

> As we have said, the methods of magic and witchcraft, practised in Chota-Nagpur and its adjoining territories inhabited by the Kharias, would appear to be generally common among Kharias as well as among their neighbours, both aboriginal and low-class Hindu. In fact, there are good reasons to believe that the methods of magic and witchcraft now practised in common by practitioners of the magic art among Hindu castes and Hinduised tribes of these parts as well as among the comparatively advanced aboriginal tribes such as the Oraons, the Mundas, the Santals, the Hos, and the Kharias, have been in great part derived from one main common source, probably the ancient Dravidian peoples of Mediterranean origin. Not that the pre-Dravidian tribes like the Kharias were altogether strangers to the art. In fact, the magic incantations even among the rudest aboriginal tribes have always been resorted to, and believed to work wonders: the occult powers of certain words, names and numbers, and even of animals and reptiles, and certain herbs, grains and other inanimate objects is dreaded.[1]

754 [648] With Kols witchery and the evil eye go together and a woman is more likely to be a witch than a man. Gond women particularly, it was noted, should be suspected and kept at a distance. The true witch is not such through any power acquired by her, but is rather born a witch from the very beginning; the gift though, may be trained and the art developed. The witch's power frequently depends upon his or her control over the supernormal powers and spirits which are at beck and call and which can be sent out on missions of evil. We did not come across any actual witches. They were said to be found "in another village".

Witches are able to cast spells which reach far beyond the range of normal powers and are able to work havoc against whomsoever they are directed. It was found that these spells could be sent from Jubbulpore "even to Rewa"; that they travelled with great speed like an aeroplane, and that they would reach distant places within an hour or an hour and a half. If the spell should be directed against a particular person in a village it will fall somewhere in or near

1 Roy, S. C., *The Kharias*, p. 410.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

that village. Wherever it alights it is bound to cause damage and this is a proof that it has really arrived. From this point the spell is said to find its way to the person against whom it was directed. 754

There is no way of seeing spells travel towards one, and should they actually be discharged toward the intended victim harm is certain to result. Often the person gets information beforehand that his enemy is employing a witch to injure him, and he can then suitably protect himself and neither the spell nor any other agency employed by the witch can touch him. [755]